

**Introduced by Senator Soto
(Principal coauthor: Senator Torlakson)**

February 3, 2003

Senate Joint Resolution No. 6—Relative to emergency services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 6, as introduced, Soto. First responder training.

This measure would call upon Congress and the President of the United States to provide funding to the states for first responder training as part of homeland security funding.

Fiscal committee: yes.

1 WHEREAS, The devastating September 11, 2001, attacks in
2 New York and Washington, D.C., changed the way our nation
3 thinks about terrorism. Those attacks, during which hundreds of
4 police officers, firefighters, and other emergency personnel died
5 (along with thousands of civilians), emphasized the need for all
6 levels of government to devote additional resources and devise
7 creative new strategies toward preventing future attacks on United
8 States soil; and

9 WHEREAS, The first line of defense in protecting life and
10 property often falls to the states and local communities; and

11 WHEREAS, Police officers and firefighters are often the first
12 to arrive at the scene of an emergency or disaster, and every day,
13 many of these dedicated “first responders” place themselves in
14 harm’s way to save the lives of others-hundreds died on September
15 11 so that thousands could live; and

16 WHEREAS, Because terrorist attacks or natural disasters could
17 strike at any time, having adequate numbers of these first

1 responders available will be critical to forestalling and minimizing
2 the potential loss of life in possible future attacks, as well as
3 meeting the challenges of other types of emergencies or natural
4 disasters; and

5 WHEREAS, Many regions of California face an acute shortage
6 of trained paramedics, who are often called upon to administer
7 sophisticated, life-saving medical care to the victims of
8 emergencies or disasters; and

9 WHEREAS, Experience has shown that by training firefighters
10 to perform as paramedics and thus providing them with additional
11 tools to assist in emergencies and disasters, the loss of life can be
12 minimized; and

13 WHEREAS, In January 2002, President George W. Bush told
14 an audience of mayors and other local government officials
15 gathered at the White House that he would commit more than \$1
16 billion for first responder training as part of his Homeland Security
17 legislative package. “Your police forces, your emergency medical
18 teams, your fire fighters ... are responsible for the first response on
19 any terrorist attack, and are responsible for saving lives. The first
20 minutes or hours after an attack, are the most hopeful minutes for
21 saving lives,” the President told the local officials; and

22 WHEREAS, It has been the expressed desire of the Legislature
23 and Governor of the State of California to ensure that our state is
24 properly prepared and adequately staffed with trained first
25 responders, including a plan to use some of the promised federal
26 Homeland Security funds allocated to California for paramedic
27 training for firefighters; and

28 WHEREAS, The legislation approved by Congress and signed
29 into law by the President in November, 2002, contained no
30 provision for first responder training; now, therefore, be it

31 *Resolved by the Senate and Assembly of the State of California,*
32 *jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California reaffirms its
33 commitment to strengthening our cities and counties as the first
34 line of defense of our people, and to giving our firefighters the
35 training they need to provide critical care in disasters or
36 emergencies; and be it further

37 *Resolved,* That because the severe budget crisis in California
38 and other states limits the states’ ability to provide such necessary
39 training to protect citizens, the Legislature of the State of
40 California calls upon Congress and the President of the United

1 States to fulfill the pledge to provide badly needed funding to the
2 states for first responder training. Fulfilling this pledge would be
3 a low-cost way to help make the homeland more secure; and be it
4 further

5 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
6 this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
7 States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Majority
8 Leader of the Senate, and each Senator and Representative from
9 California in Congress.

